

Message Text

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ACTION NODS-00

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FM AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2896

S E C R E T LUSAKA 0495

NODIS

EO 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR ZA MASS

SUBJECT: ZAMBIAN INTEREST IN US ARMS ASSISTANCE

REF: STATE 44638; LUSAKA 471

1. AT CONCLUSION OF CONVERSATION ON SOUTHERN AFRICA FEB 27, PRESIDENT KAUNDA'S POLITICAL ADVISER MARK CHONA ON "PURELY PERSONAL BASIS AND WITHOUT INSTRUCTIONS" ASKED ME WHAT US COULD DO TO HELP ZAMBIA DEFEND ITSELF WITH MODERN SURFACE-TO-AIR MISSILES. CHONA COMMENTED THAT WHILE ZAMBIA WAS RECOGNIZED AND APPRECIATED BY HER FRIENDS AS "A FORCE FOR POLITICAL STABILITY IN SOUTHERN AFRICA"; STABILITY NONETHELESS DEPENDED VERY MUCH ON MILITARY STRENGTH TO SUSTAIN IT.

2. CHONA CONFESSED HE ILL-INFORMED ON TYPES OF SOPHISTICATED WEAPONS THAT WOULD DO WELL FOR ZAMBIA BUT WOULD LOOK INTO TECHNICALIES FOR LATER DISCUSSION.

3. IN REPLY I TOLD CHONA ZAMBIA WAS NOT ELIGIBLE (AS WAS ZAIRE) FOR US MILITARY ASSISTANCE AND THERE WERE MANY BUREAUCRATIC COMPLICATIONS AND DELAYS TO OBTAINING PRESIDENTIAL DETERMINATION, CONGRESSIONAL REVIEW, ETC. HE UNDERSTOOD, BUT STILL FELT A START SHOULD BE MADE AND SAID PRESIDENT KAUNDA WOULD PROBABLY RAISE SUBJECT WITH ME IN OUR MARCH 1 MEETING.

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4. THEN I RATHER MISCHIEVOUSLY NOTED THIS WAS NOT FIRST

TIME WE HAD HEARD OF ZAMBIAN INTEREST TO ACQUIRE
SOPHISTICATED ARMS. CONTINUING OBLIQUELY I INQUIRED
IF TINY ROWLAND WAS AUTHORIZED SPOKESMAN OR AGENT FOR
ZAMBIA. CHONA SEEMED TO MAKE THE CONNECTION AND PROMPTLY
SAID "HE DEFINITELY IS NOT", CONFIRMING OUR SUSPICIONS
THAT ROWLAND MAY HAVE ACTED INDEPENDENTLY IN APPROACHING
AMEMBASSY LONDON.

5. REQUEST DEPT'S INSTRUCTIONS AS TO WHAT I MIGHT
SAY TO KAUNDA WHEN AND IF HE RAISES QUESTION. FOR
EXAMPLE, DO WE WANT TO BE IMMEDIATELY RESPONSIVE AND IF
SO, ARE WE PREPARED AT THIS STAGE TO GO SO FAR AS TO
SUGGEST SOME EXPLORATORY TECHNICAL CONVERSATIONS WITH
QUALIFIED US OFFICIALS, I.E., FROM NEARBY MISSIONS SUCH
AS EMBASSY KINSHASA. OR WOULD WE PREFER TO ENCOURAGE
ZAMBIANS INDEPENDENTLY TO ATTEMPT ARTICULATE THEIR REQUESTS
(ALTHOUGH THEY WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE OF US EQUIPMENT)
PREPARATORY TO POSSIBLE DESPATCH OF ZAMBIAN MILITARY
MISSION TO US? WILL REQUIRE DEPT'S PRELIMINARY REACTION
BY COB MARCH 1 IF I AM TO RESPOND TO FIRST OPPORTUNITY
AT STATE HOUSE.
WILKOWSKI

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